

DRAFT VERSION

lowAccess Project Plan

Project 2 & 3: Internet Training Materials & Program

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Project Budget: \$200,000 - Project 2
\$200,000 - Project 3

Mission Statement

To educate the public about, reduce fear of, and encourage use of the Internet through pilot trainings.

Needs Statement

The Intergovernmental Information Technology & Telecommunications (IITT) Task Force surveyed over 5,000 lowans to ascertain their level of technology use, and their perceptions on the role of government in offering electronic services and training on those electronic services to the public.

Audience: General Public

- 85% of the survey respondents agreed that government should offer services and information electronically.
- 84% of the survey respondents believed that government should educate the public about electronic service and information options and train the public on accessing these options.
- More individuals will conduct government business or access government services electronically as long as it meets certain criteria -- exchanges need to be easy, affordable, and secure. 51% of the survey respondents would access the electronic services without hesitation, 21% of the respondents would choose electronic options if the above conditions are met, and only 8% declined completely.

Audience: Government Employees

- The majority (57%) of local, state, and federal government employees polled consider themselves either low-level users (34%) or non-users (23%) of telecommunications

technologies. For comparison purposes, only 5% of the private sector business respondents stated that they do not use telecommunications technologies.

- However, the majority (55%) of government respondents use electronic mail through an Intranet or the Internet.
- The survey findings suggest that government should develop communication strategies that focus on the basics and the real benefits to the citizen. The survey suggests:
- Government can not simply offer the services -- it must market the services to the general public and provide training and educational materials that demonstrate convenience and emphasize the actual benefits of accessing information. Iowans do not necessarily want to be online -- they want the quick access to information and services that being online gives them.
- Those who currently use technology do not need to be sold on the benefits. They simply want the services to be available electronically. They should not be the focus of any public training or marketing effort, because they will come along on their own.

Problem Statement

According to estimates compiled by Resource Planning Associates, about 35% of all Iowa households own personal computers, and only 20% use computer modems at home to access online services. Internet usage is generally low among the general public.

- Fear and the lack of basic knowledge are two primary factors in the low utilization of the Internet. This problem can be viewed as a literacy issue -- some of the same factors that preclude a person from seeking help in reading may also be factors in use of the Internet.
- Access barriers also are a factor. Access barriers include cost of service, assistive technology needs, travel, and differing learning styles (text based vs. multi-media).
- Information overload can become a factor for novice Internet users -- and preclude them from using the Internet again. Learning how to narrow searches and use the Internet as a tool to finding appropriate information can be helpful in addressing this problem.
- Local governments are struggling to keep up with technology because many have limited resources to invest and may lack the expertise necessary to justify the investment. State and federal government has made an effort to place a great deal of information about various departments, their missions, and their programs on the Internet. Only a handful of local governments have been able to put information about their communities on the Internet. Local governments need to have the tools and technical assistance necessary

to place information on the Internet. *This is another audience that this project needs to target in its efforts.*

- All levels of government lag behind the private sector in use of online technologies. For example, electronic fund transfers and order processing are common forms of electronic commerce in the private sector. Government rarely uses such forms of electronic commerce for a variety of reasons. Government employees may not understand how security and privacy issues can be addressed internally, and communicated to the public. *Three groups of government employees should be targeted -- those individuals that are responsible for putting information on the Internet, those individuals that work directly with the public, and high-level government decision makers that guide departmental policies on use of the Internet.*

Project Purpose

To communicate potential Internet applications to government employees, and the general public, and develop and evaluate pilot training processes so that they may be able to comfortably use the Internet.

Project Parameters

There is a demonstrated need to provide more opportunities for the general public and government personnel to learn about, access, and use the Internet. This project will focus on value-added components, accessibility, and convenience. The lessons learned by the US Postal Service (WINGS) and the Social Security Administration demonstrate the need for very service-oriented approaches to using the Internet, rather than technically-oriented information about the Internet itself. For example, federal agencies have learned that trainings and public education efforts should NOT emphasize the Internet as the mode of delivery, but the value-added by an option that allows you 24-hour, 7-day service in convenient community locations.

There are three distinct components of this project:

1. Implement a plan for distributing and marketing the model web page developed by lowAccess Project 1.
2. Test and evaluate Internet training materials in a series of pilot projects. These projects will test how effective different materials are in addressing access barriers and problem factors such as fear and lack of knowledge.
3. Provide guidance to the Arizona State University in the development of a second Internet introductory video. This project will have two levels of involvement with ASU -- give ASU feedback on the topics to be addressed in the videotape and feedback on the final script.

Focus of Project

- Trainings, materials, and educational efforts will focus on practical applications that are low risk, high volume (security concerns are low, but use is very high).
- Educational efforts will test different methods for “hooking” the public -- or getting them interested enough to come to a training session.
- Government employee training should focus on how you teach people to use the Internet, sell the value of the Internet, and use the Internet.
- Not only learn how we get people to access the Internet, but how we get people to take the next step and *give* information on the Internet. Size of city may be a factor and should be looked at in the evaluation.
- Through this approach, this project hopes to find out the sites most popular with the public, user profiles (this may dispel some preconceived notions and help in targeting populations), and content of effective trainings.

Steps in the Process

ASU Internet Materials

- Step 1: Determine dates ASU needs input from project team.
- Step 2: Develop a list of the topics that should be covered by the ASU videotape, suggestions on the format for the videotape, and provide these comments to ASU.
- Video should be short -- instead of a 30-minute tape, it should be broken down to 3-10 minute or 6-5 minute segments.
 - Focus on practical applications, not the Internet itself (What does it mean to John Q. Public).
- Step 3: Review ASU videotape script and provide feedback on the content and approach.

Internet Training Pilots

- Step 1: Conduct a literature review and research information available about Internet materials, trainings, and studies on effectiveness of approaches.

- How do other areas handle limited use of the network? (Offensive or age-sensitive materials at public access points)
- How can the information gathered be applied in Iowa?
- Review Iowa-specific information as well as national information.
- What did other areas do to eliminate fears of customers?
- Charlotte Public Television video
- US Postal Service video (WINGS promotional)
- Cleveland, Blakesburg, CedarNet

Step 2: Define the scope of the trainings and the information to be recorded and evaluated.

This project hopes to find out the following information:

General Public -- Value-added Training

- The point of entry into the Internet (where did they get the access)
- Kind of access used (text-based, multi-media, etc.)
- Level of basic knowledge of the Internet
- Effectiveness of various types of materials and formats
- What types of information people are willing to give on the Internet
- What are they using it for
- How much is too much information

Government Employees -- Customer Service Training

- All of the above.
- How much customer service training is (or has been) available about the use of the Internet
- How do employees currently use the Internet
- Level of employee knowledge about what government information in their area (and other areas) is on the Internet

Government Employee -- Decision Makers -- Management (big picture) Training

- Barriers to using the Internet
- Knowledge of agency (and government) use of the Internet
- Fears
- How is use communicated now -- how should it be

Local Governments using Model Web Page -- FYI Information Campaign

- How many -- used the model web page, modified the model web page, or did not think the model web page was of use.

Step 3: Select site(s), materials to be used, training models (including possible literacy models), and participants in the Internet Training Evaluation Pilots.

Initial List of Sites

- Community Colleges
- Councils of Governments
- Libraries
- Extension offices
- City Halls and County Courthouses
- Grocery stores

- Step 4: Contract with a training group and an independent evaluation team to carry out the work of this project.
- Step 5: Develop trainings for the following audiences -- general public (non-users), general public (users), government employees that work directly with the public (front-line staff), government employees that are responsible for putting things on the Internet, and high-level government decision makers that will be guiding departmental policies on use of the Internet.
- Step 6: Develop methods to get people interested in the Internet -- and the trainings. (This could involve short PSAs, press releases, and “did you know” segments in targeted training areas). The group should look at testing the WINGS video approach, with examples of services and information *already* available using the Internet.
- Step 7: Develop evaluation materials for the pilots.
- Step 8: Obtain input from various sources (Iowa Access Citizen Council, Steering Committee, Project 2 & 3 Team, Project 4 Team) and adjust materials, scripts, and tools as necessary.
- Step 9: Complete final evaluations on each pilot and an overall evaluation which makes recommendations on the necessary components of training, materials to be used, targeting techniques for specific audiences, and other issues identified by the project team. The report will consider whether “one-size will fit all” in Internet training curriculum, materials, and media use.

Local Government Training for Model Web Page

- Step 1: Interview ISAC, the League of Cities, Chamber of Commerce Association, Iowa Library Association, and the Iowa Association of Regional Councils to determine the role these organizations can play in the distribution of the model web page.
- Step 2: List resources available that can provide cities, counties, and other local entities assistance in using, modifying, and maintaining the web page.

Step 3: Develop an plan for distribution of the model web page, and marketing its availability.

Resources Needed to Proceed with Project

Consultants -- Trainers to develop training format and carry out pilots.

Consultants -- Independent group of evaluators to complete comprehensive evaluation of pilots' effectiveness, appropriateness, and other concerns as identified. This group will also make recommendations as to the content, presentation, format, and accessibility of future Internet training materials.

Arizona State University -- Staff and students of ASU will develop materials based on the input of the project team.

Training Materials: This includes those developed by GSA and ASU (provided without charge to the project team) and other materials from a variety of sources.

\$400,000 -- \$200,000 will fund the ASU portion of the project; \$200,000 will fund the Internet training evaluation portion of this project

Broad Timeline for Project

To be filled in when work plan is completed.

Target Population

- General public (non-users)
- General public (users)
- Local, state, and federal government employees that work directly with the public (front-line staff)
- Local, state, and federal government employees that are responsible for putting things on the Internet (technical staff -- using model web page)
- Local, state, and federal government employees that will be guiding departmental policies on use of the Internet (directors)

Project Goals

1. Develop a standard guidance on using the model web page.
2. Use professional associations and affiliated organizations to distribute and market the model web page.
3. Pilot Internet training courses to segments of the general public and government employees.
4. Complete an evaluation of the effectiveness of these pilot trainings in meeting the needs of the targeted audiences.
5. Suggest training content and media that works best with targeted groups, and develop a comprehensive recommendation that will help focus future training and public education efforts.

Develop the Means of Evaluating the Project

Steering Committee/Citizen Council Evaluation

This portion of the evaluation will encompass three elements:

1. The Project Plan, Budget, and Work Plan will be reviewed in June 1997. Feedback will be provided to each Project Team and should be incorporated in each project element.
2. Work Plans and Project Plans from each Project Team will be presented to citizens at focus group sessions. Feedback from these focus groups will need to be addressed by the Project Team.
3. As part of their Quarterly Reports, each Project Team will be required to submit an update on their project evaluation. This evaluation will involve citizen comments.

Internal Project Evaluation

This will be determined by the evaluators and trainers chosen for this portion of the project. The Project Team will define the parameters and standards for that evaluation, and identify some of the measurable outcomes to be reviewed.

How Privacy & Security Issues Addressed in Project Design

This project does not implement an application which requires security and privacy to be maintained. However, the project does begin the process of evaluating how information should be presented to various target groups (government employees and the general public) and what issues must be addressed in order to motivate individuals to use the Internet to obtain government information and services.

Privacy and security will undoubtedly rank high among the public's concerns in using the Internet. Training materials and public education materials will need to address privacy concerns subtly -- by demonstrating benefits and ease of use. Government workers will certainly be concerned about protecting the integrity of their data and will need to understand how some information can be accessed by the public while other information is secure. The largest concern is in demonstrating the appropriate language to use when discussing privacy and security with the public -- government employees need to be careful in how they discuss this with their customers and government decision makers will need to make sure they understand how to communicate with their employees.

For this reason, trainings may take a "customer service training" approach to government employee training and a "management training" for upper-level government decision makers. Privacy and security must be addressed, but an indirect tact will achieve more than immediately alerting new users of the Internet to a problem that may not exist for them.

The project team will make sure that privacy and security are addressed by including subtle messages in the training that addresses the public's concerns about privacy, and government employee concerns about security.

Determine Approaches to Public Education About the Project

The goal of this project is to reduce or eliminate fear and lack of knowledge as a factor in accessing the Internet. This entire project is an approach to public education. The project team will consider the following public education efforts:

- Conduct a series of "Did You Know" segments aimed at getting people interested in information available on the Internet -- and Internet trainings available.
- Produce public service announcements and utilize the free press to generate interest in Internet training.

Project Benefits

Any person receiving the Internet training will benefit from consistent information that is timely and presented in ways that eliminate barriers such as fear and accessibility. Trainings will take into consideration the various learning styles of the trainee, and will take a practical approach to the Internet.

Internet trainings, public education campaigns, and various materials will need to be developed if the public is to become interested in these options and motivated to use electronic options. This project will lay the groundwork for the development of those materials and trainings.

The information gathered about the appropriateness and effectiveness of materials and trainings will help develop targeted information pieces which address the real and perceived concerns and needs of the public.

Likewise, government will need to internally “sell” the use technology to provide services. Information gathered will help clarify the messages government sends to its employees -- and therefore the messages government employees send to the public.

The Steering Committee and the Citizen Council need to look at the need for an overall marketing plan, which includes a needs assessment and market research that is Iowa-specific.

Sustainability

Web Page

The model web page will be sustainable if local government professional associations and organizations which assist local governments market it, provide trainings on its use, and distribute it to its member organizations.

The project team will eventually need to address updates of the model web page, the need for trainings, and the need to communicate progress in use of the model web page.

Internet Training Pilots

The project team needs to address possibilities in sustaining this project through its next phase.

- Each agency has a training budget. By using a standard training together, government agencies can make better use of existing budgets. (Trainings could be conducted on an enterprise-wide basis, rather than independently by agency).
- Educate leaders so that they see that reallocating existing funds to sustain this effort is of benefit.
- Create incentives for using enterprise-wide training opportunities (cost savings that won't be lost by the agency, etc.)

ASU Training Video

The Internet is changing constantly -- and new information and technology is making searches easier, faster, and better defined. The video will be good for a period of time, but will need to be updated if it is to be helpful.